



Virginia Telecommunication Planning Initiative Letter of Interest Guidelines

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is currently accepting Letters of Interest for the Virginia Telecommunication Planning Initiative (VATPI). The primary objective of the VATPI is to ensure community sustainability and competitiveness in the global marketplace via comprehensive planning for broadband deployment. The primary objective of the VATPI is to ensure community sustainability and competitiveness in the global marketplace via comprehensive planning for broadband deployment.

The issue of telecommunications is not only one of technology; it is essential infrastructure for modern community and economic development. Providing affordable, high-speed telecommunications is a pillar of economic restructuring, the re-invention of a community's economic base and the creation of an asset-based approach. Many economies in Virginia evolved around sectors that are no longer viable—manufacturing, textile, resource extraction, etc. Broadband availability supports the creation of sustainable and competitive communities, providing access to health care, particularly through the introduction of telemedicine, improving the workforce, providing increased educational opportunities through distance learning, and encouraging an entrepreneurial economy where home-based and small businesses are able to compete globally, as well as retention of existing businesses.

VATPI is a comprehensive telecommunications planning effort that will allow communities to identify and develop elements necessary to develop a successful community broadband network. Community telecommunications plans include, at the least:

- Assessment of current broadband availability and usage;
- Address demand aggregation and future use;
- Address the relationship to regional planning and telecommunications networks;
- Address community development applications; and
- Design.

Funding

Up to \$75,000 in funds will be awarded for communities to develop a comprehensive telecommunication plan. DHCD anticipates awarding up to **8** grants awards.

Selection Process

Grantees will be selected through a two-phased selection process for the VATPI program. They include Phase I-Letter of Interest (LOI) and Phase II-Detailed Response. Response to the questions in the Letter of Interest will be evaluated by DHCD program staff. Applicants will receive notification of acceptance or declination of their LOI. Applicants whose responses reflect a strong interest and the intent of the program, as well as identify a broad range of potential stakeholders and partners will be asked respond to additional questions and submit a full proposal. Full proposal requirements will be sent to selected localities based on evaluation of the LOI.

The Letter of Interest must be submitted on or before **Friday, May 22, 2015** to Tamarah Holmes, Ph. D., at the DHCD Richmond Office. The LOI must include responses to the following items:

Letter of Interest

I. Statement of Need

Describe the current status of broadband telecommunications availability in your locality identifying all current telecommunications providers such as the incumbent telephone service carrier and existing internet service providers (ISP), their broadband capabilities, and the location of their infrastructure. Discuss gaps (underserved and un-served) in service in your locality (See **Attachment A** for recommended types of data collection and analyses).

II. Prior Experience with Telecommunication Planning

Provide details on prior experience with telecommunications planning. Please provide the year the plan was developed and evidence or results of your previous planning efforts to identify your broadband needs and solutions. Provide a copy of your Telecommunications Plan.

III. Collaboration and Community Support

The locality must convene a community meeting to obtain community input/feedback. Through community input, the locality will collect diverse viewpoints about community interests, needs, and demands for broadband. It also enables the locality to inform residents and stakeholders about the locality's interest in applying for planning grant funding from DHCD. At this meeting, energized community leaders called "sparkplugs" should be identified and asked to serve as a member(s) of the management team. Provide copies of community meeting advertisement/notices, agendas, minutes, and sign in sheets.

IV. Stakeholders

Identify potential stakeholders who may serve as a member of your Management Team. Provide a list of your potential stakeholders, including their name, title, organization, and sectors represented. This section should discuss the identification and engagement of potential stakeholders (see list of recommended fields) that will participate in the outreach and aggregation process and how this project will be promoted to relevant stakeholders.

Your management team will provide oversight and direction throughout the planning process including the procurement of and collaboration with consultants. It should be comprised of stakeholders representing a cross section of all potential broadband users and beneficiaries.

The following is a list of potential fields from which to seek prospective members:

- Government (government representative or elected official);
- Economic development professional;
- Representative from your Planning District Commission;*
- Public schools;*
- Higher education institutions;
- Workforce development;
- Health care (i.e. hospital, medical clinics, or private medical practice);
- Industry/Manufacturing;
- Retail and commercial business;
- Small business/entrepreneurs;
- Service sector (i.e. banking or insurance);
- Professional (i.e. legal, engineering, or accounting); and
- Police department and emergency services.

Subcommittee:

- Telephone provider; and*
- Internet service providers.*

*Required participation

Important Dates and Deadlines:

May 22, 2015:	Deadline for submission of Letter of Interest
June 1, 2015:	DHCD notifies communities that are eligible to submit a full proposal
June TBD:	DHCD hosts a Kickoff/How to Apply Session
July 17, 2015:	Deadline for submission of Full Proposals
August, 2015	Announcement and Award Notifications

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Tamarah Holmes at (804) 371-7056 or tamarah.holmes@dhcd.virginia.gov.

Attachment A

Please provide an analysis of the locality that addresses the following:

- I. Economic characteristics:
 - a. Income, age, population characteristics, households, ethnicity, employment, education,
 - b. List important local economic clusters, and
 - c. Describe local economic strengths and weaknesses.
- II. Educational needs:
 - a. Please attach any surveys of local education needs,
 - b. Number of school districts and facilities in each,
 - c. Student enrollment by grade and district,
 - d. Number of facilities by district with broadband and their speed,
 - e. Number of public libraries in region, and
 - f. Number of public libraries with broadband and their speed.
- III. Health care needs:
 - a. Please attach any surveys of local health care needs,
 - b. List of hospitals in the region and speed of broadband service,
 - c. Number of clinics, physicians and other healthcare agencies in region, and
 - d. Number of health care sites that are able to participate in tele-health services.
- IV. Public safety needs:
 - a. Please attach any surveys of local public safety needs,
 - b. Number of public safety facilities in region, e.g., fire or police, and
 - c. Number with broadband and their speed.
- V. Residential customers needs:
 - a. Please attach any surveys of local residential customer needs,
 - b. Providers, type of services and speeds offered in the region for residential customers, and
 - c. Describe any gap analysis for residential broadband service that you have performed.
- VI. Business customer needs:
 - a. Please attach any surveys of local business needs,
 - b. Providers, type of services and speeds offered in the region for business customers, and
 - c. Describe any gap analysis for business broadband service that you have performed.
- VII. Current broadband services in the locality/region:
 - a. Broadband providers in your locality/region, and
 - b. Cost and speed of broadband services available from each provider.